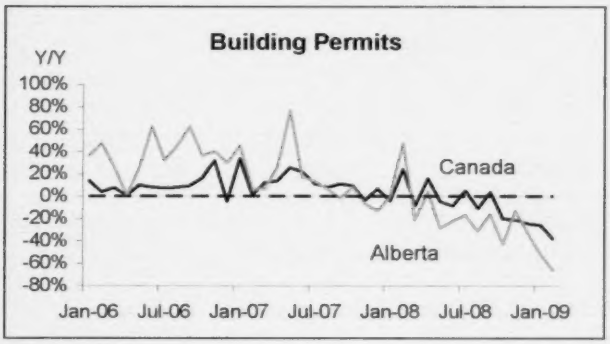
Building Permits

The construction industry stalls…

On a year-over-year basis, the seasonally-adjusted value of building permits issued in Alberta fell 65.9% in February, considerably more than the 38.0% Canada-wide decline. Alberta's residential and non-residential sectors shared the collapse equally, down 68.8% and 63.0% respectively.



Housing Starts

Housing starts disappear…

Alberta housing starts slid to 12,90 units in March, down 75.1% on a year-over-year basis. In Edmonton, housing starts fell by 71.8% to 135 units. The collapse was even more severe in Calgary, which saw activity plummet to 297 units, a 90.3% drop.

New Housing Price Index

Real estate prices fall…

New housing prices in Alberta fell 9.6% year-over-year in February, continuing the slide that has been under way since July. Edmonton's market, down 12.2%, was hit worse than Calgary, which only declined 7.1%. Across Canada, the contraction was less severe, with a countrywide average fall of 1.8%.

Labour Market

Employment contracts…

Seasonally-adjusted employment in Alberta declined to 1,987,200 in March, representing job losses of 14,900 from a month earlier. At the same time, the unemployment rate rose to 5.8%, up 0.4 percentage points from February but well below the Canadian average of 8.0%. Alberta now has the third-lowest unemployment rate among the provinces, trailing only Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

↑	**Canadian Dollar (US¢/CS)**	
	April 9, 2009	81.47
	April 3, 2009	81.06
	2009-10 YTD	80.69
↓	**WTI Oil US$/bbl**	
	April 8, 2009	$ 49.38
	April 2, 2009	$ 52.64
	2009-10 YTD	$ 50.52
↓	**Nymex Natural Gas CS/MMBtu ***	
	Near-month Contract	
	April 9, 2009	$ 4.54
	April 3, 2009	$ 4.64

* Estimate based on Nymex Futures Market Price

Ivey Purchasing Managers Index

Leading indicators mixed…

After rebounding to 45.2 in February, the Ivey Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) fell to 43.2 in March. As a dispersion index, PMI values below 50 indicate falling purchasing levels and declining future economic activity. Two PMI subindices moved into positive territory, however, with the Inventories index increasing to 50.8 and the Prices index moving up to 54.7.

Merchandise Trade

Energy trade declines, manufacturing resumes...

The Alberta international export sector continued to contract in February, with total exports down 30.2% on a year-over-year basis. The value of energy exports fell 35.1%, accelerating from the 31.5% decline in January. Agriculture exports, on the other hand, rose 3.6%, keeping the year-to-date export growth in that sector flat.

Across Canada, exports rose by 5.2%, led by increases in machinery, equipment and automotive exports. Combined with an import increase of 1.1%, the result was a trade surplus of $126 million – a stark change from the $1.2 billion deficit in January.

US Trade Deficit

US trade deficit diminishes…

The US trade deficit fell to a nine-year low of $26.0 billion in February, down considerably from $36.2 billion in January. The deficit reduction was largely driven by the $8.2 billion decline in imports, which more than offset a $2.0 billion fall in exports.

Alberta

CURRENT ECONOMIC INDICATORS

April 9, 2009

Overall Economy	2007	2008	2009YTD*	(year-over-year % change unless otherwise noted) Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Real GDP (in 2002 $billions)	187.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
% change	3.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Nominal GDP ($ billions)	258.9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
% change	8.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Population[1] (000's) (level)	3,511	3,585	3,632	3,611	--	--	3,632	--	--
% change	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.4	--	--	2.6	--	--
Net Interprovincial Migraton[1] (level)	33,809	10,010	11,125	4,927	--	--	6,198	--	--
Net International Migration[1] (level)	16,136	19,283	9,004	4,907	--	--	4,097	--	--
Net Non-permanent Residents[1] (level)	13,539	17,890	12,931	8,061	--	--	4,870	--	--
Labour Market									
Employment (000's) NSA	1,959	2,013	2,005	2,035	2,032	2,023	2,026	2,002	1,987
% change NSA	4.7	2.8	0.1	3.2	3.2	1.5	1.2	0.2	-1.0
Unemployment Rate (%) NSA	3.5	3.6	5.2	3.7	3.5	4.2	4.4	5.4	5.8
Average Hourly Wage Rate NSA	6.0	5.7	4.8	6.2	5.0	4.1	6.2	4.5	3.6
Average Weekly Earnings[2]	5.8	6.0	7.9	3.5	7.6	6.3	7.9	--	--
Labour Income[3]	11.3	8.4	--	7.7	7.3	6.8	--	--	--
Price Indices									
Consumer Price Index	5.0	3.1	1.7	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.2	2.1	--
Excluding food and energy	4.9	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.7	1.5	2.0	--
Non-Res. Const. Cost Index[4] (quarterly)	17.3	13.2	--	--	8.8 (Q4)	--	--	--	--
Farm Product Price Index	14.3	11.1	-6.0	1.3	-0.9	-4.7	-6.0	--	--
Crops	41.4	26.3	-22.8	-9.2	-14.9	-20.7	-22.8	--	--
Livestock	0.7	2.1	14.2	14.5	17.7	13.5	14.2	--	--
Household Sector									
Housing Starts (SAAR, 000's) NSA	48.1	29.0	14.4	25.2	20.5	20.0	16.7	13.6	12.9
% change	-2.1	-39.7	-64.2	-46.8	-52.7	-48.3	-53.0	-59.4	-75.1
New Housing Price Index	22.5	0.7	-9.0	-4.5	-5.1	-6.1	-8.4	-9.6	--
Edmonton NSA	32.1	1.0	-11.3	-7.7	-7.9	-8.2	-10.4	-12.2	--
Calgary	16.2	0.6	-6.8	-1.6	-2.5	-4.3	-6.5	-7.1	--
MLS Average Resale Prices	24.3	-1.4	-9.6	-3.7	-4.2	-7.4	-10.0	-9.2	--
Edmonton	34.3	-2.0	-6.6	-8.6	-2.0	-5.7	-4.5	-8.7	--
Calgary	18.7	-2.9	-11.1	-5.6	-6.0	-9.4	-11.4	-10.8	--
Retail Sales	9.3	-0.2	-6.3	3.1	-5.9	-7.8	-6.3	--	--
New Motor Vehicle Sales	3.3	-7.2	-22.2	-2.6	-11.6	-23.6	-22.2	--	--
Business Sector									
Public and Private Investment[5]	9.1	3.6	-14.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mining and oil and gas[5]	0.3	-1.4	-28.2	--	--	--	--	--	--
Rigs Drilling	-35.2	-2.1	-42.5	18.3	3.5	-10.2	-24.4	-43.9	-60.8
Goods Exports (customs based)	5.3	33.2	-28.7	43.5	16.4	-7.9	-27.3	-30.2	--
Energy NSA	4.4	40.9	-33.2	50.8	18.0	-7.9	-31.5	-35.1	--
Agriculture	9.8	28.6	0.0	31.5	35.8	16.8	-3.4	3.6	--
Total Farm Cash Receipts (quarterly)	11.9	15.2	--	--	--	8.5 (Q4)	--	--	--
Manufacturing Shipments	1.9	6.9	-13.3	7.7	-4.8	-8.4	-13.3	--	--
Wholesale Trade	4.5	10.9	1.8	14.8	7.4	13.5	1.8	--	--
Building Permits	13.4	-16.5	-61.0	-43.8	-14.7	-29.1	-52.5	-67.5	--
Residential NSA	10.7	-31.5	-70.2	-35.2	-42.2	-37.2	-67.0	-72.5	--
Non-residential	17.1	3.7	-52.8	-50.6	24.5	-21.4	-40.2	-62.9	--

Finance and Enterprise

* YTD – year-to-date represents the change since the beginning of the year compared to the same period in the previous year.

[1] Quarterly; annual numbers are presented on a census year basis (July 1 - June 30). The January population estimate is also the 2009 year-to-date value.

[2] The average weekly earnings series was extensively revised on March 31, 2009 and is no longer comparable with numbers in previous Bulletins

[3] Total income earning in Alberta including wages and salaries, and supplementary income.

[4] Average of Calgary and Edmonton.

[5] 2009 based on initial investment intentions, 2008 preliminary actuals, and 2007 actuals

Sources: All data is from Statistics Canada except Housing Starts (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), MLS Average Resale Prices (Canadian Real Estate Association) and Rigs Drilling (Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors).

Alberta

CURRENT ECONOMIC INDICATORS, BY PROVINCE

	Canada	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
Conference Board Forecast (Winter 2009)											
Real GDP Growth											
2007 (actuals, Statistics Canada)	**2.7%**	9.1%	2.4%	1.7%	1.7%	2.7%	2.3%	3.3%	2.5%	**3.1%**	3.0%
2008	**0.7%**	1.0%	1.2%	1.6%	1.1%	1.0%	0.0%	2.7%	5.4%	**0.6%**	1.0%
2009	**-0.5%**	-2.6%	0.6%	-0.3%	0.2%	-0.4%	-1.2%	1.0%	1.6%	**-0.5%**	-0.1%
Population (As of January 1, 2009)											
Population	**33,504,680**	508,990	140,402	939,531	748,319	7,782,561	12,986,857	1,213,815	1,023,810	**3,632,483**	4,419,974
Annual Growth Rate[a]	**1.21%**	0.24%	1.25%	0.25%	0.23%	0.86%	1.05%	1.11%	1.50%	**2.58%**	1.70%
Net Interprovincial Migration											
2008 Census Year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008)		1,299	42	-117	-325	-12,399	-16,522	-503	8,067	**10,010**	11,458
4th Quarter (October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008)		292	-503	108	264	-2,139	-6,517	249	949	**6,198**	1,453
Employment											
Level Change (000s)[b]	**-232.3**	-7.6	-1.5	8.8	-2.4	-62.6	-143.4	5.7	14.5	**4.4**	-48.2
Percent Change[b]	**-1.4%**	-3.7%	-2.3%	2.0%	-0.7%	-1.6%	-2.2%	1.0%	2.9%	**0.2%**	-2.1%
Unemployment Rate, 2009 avg	**7.5**	14.7	12.1	8.8	8.8	7.8	8.4	4.7	4.4	**4.9**	6.4
Participation Rate, 2009 avg	**67.4**	59.1	67.5	64.8	64.9	65.2	67.7	69.6	70.5	**74.8**	65.8
Average Weekly Earnings (SA)											
January 2009	**823.71**	772.88	677.87	731.21	741.02	749.98	851.40	765.96	802.43	**955.35**	798.70
% Increase[c]	**3.2%**	4.1%	4.3%	4.1%	4.0%	-0.1%	2.9%	4.9%	6.3%	**7.9%**	3.4%
2009 Wage Settlements										**1.5%**	
CPI Inflation											
February Annual	**1.4%**	0.9%	1.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	1.5%	1.7%	2.6%	**2.1%**	1.5%
Excluding Shelter	**0.7%**	-0.1%	1.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%	0.6%	**1.5%**	1.5%
Housing Starts (000s)											
SAAR February 2009	**154.7**	3.1	0.5	4.2	3.7	44.5	64.1	3.9	3.8	**12.9**	14.0
Retail Sales											
Percent Change[d]	**-4.5%**	-1.1%	-0.5%	-1.3%	-0.8%	-2.4%	-5.4%	-2.9%	0.3%	**-6.3%**	-6.9%
2008 Retail Sales Growth	**3.2%**	7.8%	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%	4.9%	3.3%	7.1%	10.4%	**-0.2%**	0.2%
Manufacturing Shipments											
Percent Change[d]	**-17.5%**	-40.7%	17.0%	-16.1%	-25.2%	-8.9%	-23.4%	-6.5%	-6.2%	**-13.3%**	-18.4%

a. Over the past 12 months
b. February 2009 Y/Y change, unadjusted for seasonal effects
c. Updated to February 2009
d. January 2009 Y/Y change, unadjusted for seasonal effects
SA-Seasonally Adjusted
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Conference Board of Canada